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ABSTRACT

This book describes the rationale and research underlying the testing of an "audit" that explored how school districts organize themselves to reform middle-grades education. The volume is intended for those who seek to improve achievement, equity, and learning communities. Section 1 describes the theory, research, and framework for district middle-grades reform that supports the audit and planning process. Chapter 1 examines the role of the district and the central-office staff in reform, whereas chapter 2 outlines the three main components of the infrastructure of district-wide, middle-grades reform--leadership, support, and accountability--and presents the 18 standards for reform that cover these three components. The audit and planning process carried out in four diverse urban districts is described in chapter 3 and includes recommendations useful to those using the audit. Chapter 4 addresses common themes and concerns found in the districts working to establish effective systems to increase middle-grades student achievement across an entire district. Section 2 lists resources and tools for change and includes information on leadership and support standards. The third section features recommendations and examples of how to address concerns as explored by four case studies. The text concludes with examples of other districts throughout the country engaged in systemic reform. (RJM)

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